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ABSTRACT

Two concepts common in the literature concerning the affective dimension of personality are attitude and motivation. Motivation is an energizing agency producing activity congruent with the learner's underlying emotional disposition. Favorable attitudes provide endurance to the motivation necessary for prolonged application to learning. In second language learning, the learner's affective characteristics influence the learning process at a deep level, shaped by cognitive, social, and situational factors. Language learning motivation can be seen as striving to participate in certain purposeful activities, the object of which is determined by the relationship between the individual's psychological state and his desired state, i.e., his need. It is not possible to predetermine individual language learning needs objectively, because they are in constant motion and their direction is determined by experience. The elements of the language learning situation can be represented schematically at several levels: needs orientation (instrumental to integrative), personal characteristics (language learning ability, social status, introvertive/extrovertive, empathy, self-confidence, etc.), the language learning context (formal or informal experience), and outcomes (linguistic competence or extralinguistic competence). This model can help interpret the factors in the learning situation as a dynamic process. (MSE)

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# The affective dimension in second/foreign language learning : an interactional perspective

Gearóid Ó Ciaráin

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CLCS Occasional Paper No.11

Autumn 1984

# THE AFFECTIVE DIMENSION IN SECOND/FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING: AN INTERACTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

by

GEAROID O CIARAIN

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The main thrust of research into second/foreign* language learning has involved attempts to identify those factors which have a direct bearing on the learning process. It is clear that individual influences do not act in isolation from each other; on the contrary, each is modified by its interaction with the other relevant variables which are present in a particular situation. These separate variables have traditionally been the concern of (for example) anthropology, sociology, psychology and linguistics, so that it is necessary to formulate a theory of second language learning which can incorporate research findings from these disparate disciplines.

Most systems of education in industrialized societies have seen fit to include the teaching of a second/foreign language in their curricula. Frequently the results of such teaching have been less than satisfactory. It is a common complaint that despite spending years learning a foreign language very many pupils leave school incapable of conversing with native speakers of that language at a better than superficial level. Perhaps Halsey's (1972) introduction to research on educational priority areas has particular application to second/foreign language teaching:

> The essential fact of 20th century history is that egalitarian policies have failed. [...] liberal policies failed basically on an inadequate theory of

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* Although the distinction between "second language" and "foreign language" is important in some parts of the following discussion, in many others it is irrelevant. Accordingly, unless the context indicates the contrary, the two terms should be read as mutually inclusive rather than mutually exclusive.

> learning. They failed to notice that the major determinants of educational attainment were not school masters but social situations, not curriculum but motivation, not formal access to school but support in the family and community.
>
> (p.6)

This is not to despair of schools ever becoming effective agents in allowing pupils to gain competence in a second/foreign language. Rather, it emphasizes that language is a psycho-social phenomenon, and that any language teaching programme must take adequate account of the learners' social milieu. From this perspective, the teaching of a second/foreign language merely as an underlying system of grammatical relationships is seen to be inadequate. Instead, a second/foreign language should be taught in order to enable pupils to achieve certain communicative goals.

The process of coming to understand a complex set of relationships such as exists in the grammar of a language is an intellectual activity which demands prolonged concentration and a level of cognitive processing ability which would be distributed among the entire population in accordance with the curve of normal distribution; and a number of studies have concentrated on describing "language aptitude" or the set of mental abilities which facilitates the acquisition of a foreign language. Yet intuitively it would seem that any attempt to account for differences in the efficiency with which people acquire a second/foreign language solely in terms of differences in their verbal or non-verbal reasoning ability is less than adequate. As Hymes (1972) puts it:

> We have then to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of a sentence, not only as grammatical but also as appropriate. He or she acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about, with whom, when, where and in what manner. In short a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. (p.15)

One must enquire into the essential differences between the tasks of first and second language acquisition. Certain hypotheses have postulated the existence of critical periods when the brain is in a state of readiness for language acquisition (Lenneberg 1967). Exposure to a second language frequently does not occur at what these hypotheses regard as the optimum stage of maturational development and consequently the individual is less efficient in acquiring it than was the case with his first language. This hypothesis, however, remains speculative (Singleton 1981).

If one accepts Halsey's basic line of argument, then attention is switched to an examination of the affective state of the learner and his perception of his needs for the second/foreign language to which he is being exposed. This is not to deny that

the teaching situation itself plays an important role in determining that affective state. Rather, it is to claim that social, psychological and pedagogical factors all influence the dynamics of the learning situation.

Two concepts frequently used in discussion of the individual's disposition towards the learning task are those of attitude and motivation. The present paper aims to consider these concepts as they are used in the general literature of psychology and then to conduct a more detailed examination of how they have been applied to second/foreign language acquisition. A case is made for examining the affective dimension not as a separate entity in personality but rather as the product of the continuous interaction of the total set of factors which constitute a learning situation. Research which specifically focuses on the relationship of some of these factors to achievement in a target language is examined, and it is suggested that an "interactional" approach offers the best perspective from which to evaluate some apparently contradictory findings.

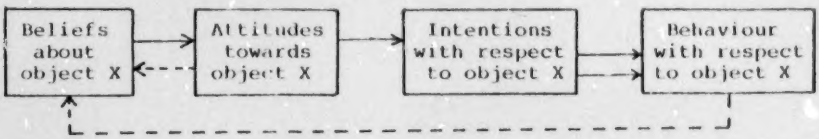
## 2 THE EFFECT OF AFFECT

### 2.1 Attitudes

Attitudes may be viewed as complexes of ideas and sentiments which predispose a person to act or react in a certain manner when confronted with certain stimuli. Oppenheim (1966) isolates three components of attitudes: (a) the emotional component, which may attract strong feelings; (b) the cognitive component, which reinforces these feelings by beliefs; and (c) the action tendency component, which may lead to particular forms of behaviour. Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) reserve the term "attitude" for just one of these categories, viz. the emotional or affective category, and attempt to clarify the concept by constructing a

FIGURE 1

Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) conceptual framework for distinguishing between beliefs, attitudes, intentions and behaviours.


Beliefs about object X
Attitudes towards object X
Intentions with respect to object X
Behaviour with respect to object X

conceptual framework concerned with the relation between these variables. They conceptualize attitude as the amount of affect

for or against some object, and the person's beliefs serve as the informational base which determines his attitudes. These beliefs and attitudes serve as the major determinants of the person's intentions with respect to the object in question, and intentions, in turn, are major determinants of overt behaviour.

While there is no limit to the topics about which people may have attitudes, these sets of ideas and sentiments can be characterized by their direction, intensity and dimension (Richterich and Chancerel 1978). "Direction" refers to whether the individual is attracted or repulsed by the stimulus, and "intensity" refers to the strength of that attraction or repulsion. The object of the attitude may be simple or complex. The single well-defined object may lead to a unidimensional attitude, but more frequently the object of the individual's beliefs and feelings is a complex dynamic phenomenon which gives rise to a multi-dimensional attitude.

Oskamp (1977) cites four functions for attitudes:

(i) Understanding: Attitudes help to make sense of occurrences around us.

(ii) Need satisfaction: Many attitudes are formed as a result of past rewards or punishments for saying or doing particular things. Once formed, they help the individual satisfy needs or reach goals. They are termed "adjustive" to the extent that they help the individual adjust to life situations, or "utilitarian" insofar as they help the individual to reach particular goals.

(iii) Ego defence: Attitudes enhance self-esteem.

(iv) Value expression: A value-expressive attitude is one which helps to establish a person's self-identity, which portrays the sort of person he is.

Opinions may be regarded as verbal expressions of underlying attitudes, and the means of eliciting these opinions has undergone a considerable amount of technical development in recent years.

The value of measured attitudes as predictors of particular forms of overt behaviour has been the subject of considerable controversy among social scientists. Much of the research on the attitude-behaviour relationship has not found evidence of a very close correspondence (Warren and Jahoda 1973). It is clear that in any attempt to predict behaviour additional factors must also be considered. Weissberg (1965) treats attitudes as just one of the entities in a complex set of interactions which are responsible for particular patterns of behaviour. One cannot expect to be able to predict behaviour directly from attitude measurement scores without taking cognizance of the other relevant factors which may be interacting with such attitudes.

For example, one may have a negative attitude towards a particular type of behaviour but yet regard such behaviour as being prudent in specific circumstances. It is this interaction of all significant factors in particular situations which makes it impossible to trace a direct relationship between attitudes and behaviour. This conception of the attitude-behaviour relationship not only underlines the importance of the further development of the tools used for attitude measurement but also demands close investigation of how predispositions interact with other perceived environmental factors. According to the Fishbein and Ajzen model discussed above, attitude is a general predisposition and does not predispose the person to perform any specific behaviour. In an earlier paper Fishbein (1967) identifies three kinds of variables that junction as the basic determinants of behaviour. The first of these is the individual's beliefs about the consequences of performing a particular behaviour and his evaluation of these consequences. Secondly, there is the question of the individual's norm or rule of behaviour and also his perception of the social or group norm. The importance of these factors is determined by the strength of the individual's desire to do what he thinks he should do. This desire is the third variable in the Fishbein formula.

Language attitudes have been described by Gardner and Lambert (1972) in terms of the individual's perceptions and beliefs about the ethnolinguistic group who speak the language in question, and it is within their conceptual framework that the greatest body of research on the relationship between language attitude and successful language acquisition has taken place.

## 2.2 Motivation

Psychologists have not found it possible to agree on a definition of the nature and source of human motivation. In the view of Cofer and Appley, "[...] the answer to this question will differ somewhat with the orientation of the tradition from which it derives" (1964, p.7). In fact, Allport held that "any theory of personality pivots upon its analysis of the nature of motivation" (1961, p.196). The general concept of motivation has traditionally been used in attempts to explain (a) why people are active at all and (b) why their activities take one direction rather than another (Hjella and Ziegler 1976). Explanations range from Freud's drive reduction hypothesis through Maslow's theory of hierarchical motivations to Rogers's self-actualization concept. This latter theory suggests that it is part of the nature of every living organism to attempt to reach the fullness of its potential as determined by its essence or DNA molecule (Rogers 1978). Viewing language as a facilitator of social relationships, one may deduce from this theory that an individual's motivation to learn a second language will be determined by the importance which he assigns to that second language as a means of achieving fulfilment as a social being.

Wherever the source of human motivation may lie, there is considerable agreement that the term itself refers to the process of arousing action, sustaining the activity in progress, or regulating the pattern of activity (Young 1961). While O'Doherty (1975) defines motive as "any factor of any kind that enters into the production of behaviour" (p.19), the two most important aspects of motivation may be seen as (a) the energetic aspect and (b) the regulation and direction aspect.

## 3 LANGUAGE LEARNING MOTIVATION

Much of the current debate on the nature and importance of motivational variables in second language acquisition originated in Gardner and Lambert's 1959 study. This concerned the isolation of variables relating to the French language learning achievement of Montreal high school students. Previous research had concentrated primarily on the relationship between various dimensions of language aptitude and scores on second language performance tests. But Mowrer (1950) had suggested that first language acquisition was motivated by a desire to be like valued members of the family and, later, of the whole linguistic community; and Gardner and Lambert postulated that a similar type of motivation is necessary for successful acquisition of a second language. They then isolated two essentially different types of motivation which they termed "integrative" and "instrumental". It is important to note how the distinction between the two types of motivation or "orientations" was made.

> Orientation index: S's were presented with four alternative reasons for studying French and asked to rank them as to their personal relevance. They indicated that a knowledge of French would: (1) be useful in obtaining a job, (2) be helpful in understanding the French-Canadian people and their way of life, (3) permit meeting and conversing with more and varied people, and (4) make one a better educated person. [...] S's who ranked either alternative (2) or (3) as most relevant were classified as "integratively orientated". Those choosing alternatives (1) or (4) were classified as "instrumentally orientated".
>
> (Gardner and Lambert 1972, p.193)

Factor analysis revealed that, as well as linguistic aptitude, integrative motivation was significantly related to the acquisition of French as a second language among Gardner and Lambert's subjects.

Three follow-up studies, in Louisiana, Maine and Connecticut, also found that a strong motivation and desire to learn French were factors closely associated with success. The precise relationship between motivation and achievement was, however, found to be somewhat more complex than originally envisaged (Gardner and Lambert 1972). The social milieu appeared to act as an intervening variable, so that in certain situations factors

such as parental encouragement and personal satisfaction seemed to be more important than integrative motivation for the successful learning of French. This new-found complexity was explicated by a study by Gardner and Santos (1970) in the Philippines, which found that for certain subgroups of Filipino students success at learning English was associated with an integrative motivation while for others an instrumental motivation was more important. The authors concluded that when there is a vital need to master a second language the instrumental type of motivation is probably more important. Spolsky (1969) found integrative motivation to be associated with success at learning English among foreign students who had come to study in colleges in the United States and concluded:

> We are led to note the significance of sociolinguistics to second-language pedagogy, for while psycholinguistics will continue to contribute vital data on how second languages are acquired, it is only when we look at the social dimension that we start to understand why. Learning a second language is a key to possible membership of a secondary society: the desire to join that group is a major factor in language learning. (p.282)

Schumann's 1976 paper is an attempt to analyse the significant social factors which influence second language learning. He refers primarily to societies which are bicultural and uses the construct "social distance" to refer to factors which promote or inhibit social solidarity between two groups and thus their willingness to learn each other's language. Working mainly within Shermerhorn's 1970 framework he describes the optimum social conditions for second language learning as follows:

> A good language learning situation would be one where the 2LL (second language learning) group is non-dominant in relation to the TL (target language) group, where both groups desire assimilation (or at least acculturation) for the 2LL group, where low enclosure is the goal of both groups, where two cultures are congruent, where 2LL group is small and non-cohesive, where both groups have positive attitudes towards each other, and where 2LL group intends to remain in the target language area for a long time. (p.141)

The difference between instrumental and integrative motivation is further explored by Muchnick and Wolfe (1982). In noting the possibility of a composite orientation reflecting both instrumental and integrative reasons for learning a language, they suggest that socio-cultural context determines whether or not these orientations are mutually exclusive. They found that in Philadelphia, high-school students of Spanish reported both types of motivation; and they suggested that in predominantly monolingual/monocultural societies where there are no readily evident instrumental or integrative advantages for learning a second language, students do not necessarily have to have one particular

orientation.

The most comprehensive elaboration of Gardner's socio-psychological theory of second-language learning is provided in his 1979 paper. A schematic representation of his model is given in Figure 2. The model consists of four segments: social milieu, individual differences, second language acquisition context, and outcomes. He hypothesizes that the social milieu will determine the relative importance which each of the four sets of individual differences will have for particular language learning situations. He further postulates that different second language acquisition contexts, i.e. formal and informal language learning experiences, put varying demands on each of the four sets of individual differences. High levels of intelligence and of language aptitude would, according to the model, be more vital variables for formal language learning situations than for more informal language acquisition contexts. Since the hypothesis holds that beliefs, having a social origin, influence the extent to which various individual difference variables mediate achievement in second language, the model may be described as a social-psychological one. According to the model, attitudes form the bed-rock on which motivation is built. Positive attitudes serve to maintain the desire and effort necessary for the long and sometimes tedious process of acquiring a second/foreign language. They are sufficiently general to fuel motivation over a long period of time when other short-range motivational props such as fear of failure, desire to do well, or expectations about future job requirements may waver. In Gardner's terms the concept of motivation has three facets (Gardner et al. 1979):

(i) the amount of effort expended by the individual;

(ii) how much the individual wants to learn the language;

(iii) the individual's attitude towards learning the language.

Hence motivation is composed of affect plus effort.

The model is not totally static, for while the line of causality is generally thought of as going from attitude to motivation to achievement, Gardner allows for the possibility of a loop back whereby attitudes may be influenced by the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of previous achievement. He does not, however, develop the model towards an identification of the complexes of variables which influence motivation nor towards a detailed examination of how various components of the model interact. The isolation of four categories of individual differences is also problematic. Firstly, there may be further categories, not accounted for here, which may be found to be highly significant in specific second language acquisition contexts. It seems likely that certain personality characteristics may facilitate or hinder learning and subsequent communicative use of the second language (Krashen 1981). Secondly, the four types of differences would appear to be strongly interrelated. It is

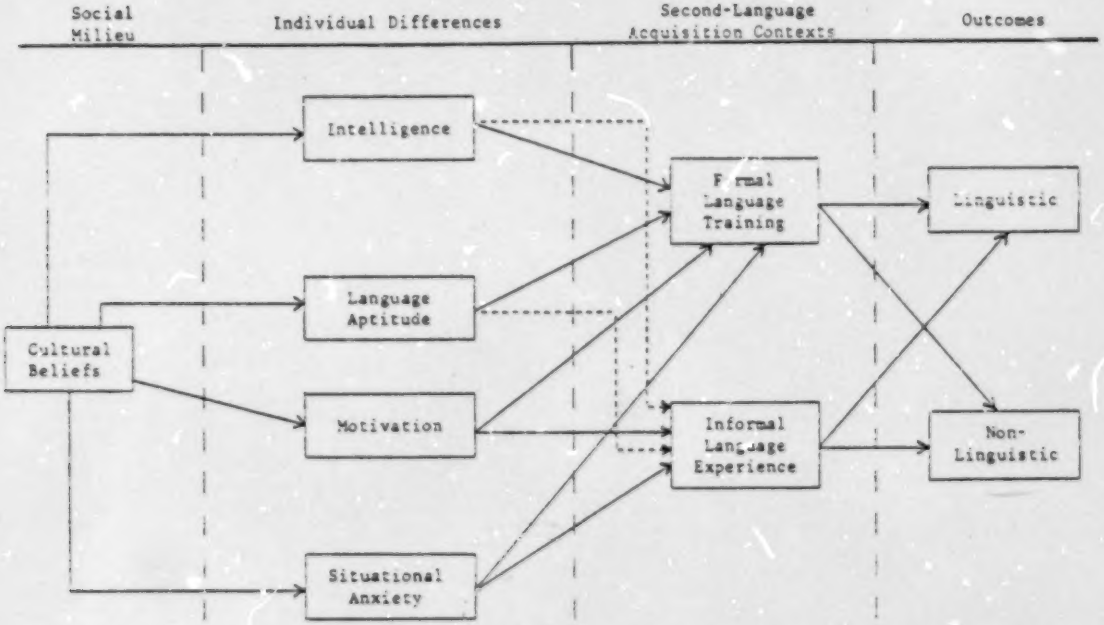



Figure 2

Schematic Representation of Gardner's (1979) Model

doubtful, for example, whether a factor such as "situational anxiety" can be defined independently of motivation. Similarly there appears to be a considerable overlap between traits which constitute general intelligence and those traits which are seen as components of foreign language learning ability. This overlap is particularly evident in the case of rote-learning ability; ability to extrapolate general rules from exposure to a broad cross-section of data, such as ability to infer grammatical rules from exposure to language in use; and ability to recall such rules and apply them to a new set of data (Carroll and Sapon 1967, O'Doherty 1975, Oller 1980).

Edwards (1980) produces a framework very similar to that of Gardner. He attempts to interpret the impact on second language acquisition of such variables as socio-cultural context, relative status of first and second languages, and the expectations of family and teachers. Expectations of success at achieving second language competence are partly the product of the social milieu. "Individual differences" and "second language acquisition context" act as intermediaries between social expectations and linguistic outcomes. Motivation is treated as the product of both instrumental and integrative orientation.

Oller, Hudson and Liu (1977) suggest that the concepts of integrative and instrumental orientation could be decomposed into orthogonal components. They suggest that integrative orientation could be redefined in terms of affective personal traits such as kindness, friendliness, sincerity, helpfulness and the like, while instrumental motivation might be associated with traits like intelligence, efficiency, desire for power, success, etc. The authors, who were investigating the relationship between attitudes and English language learning achievements among Chinese-speaking foreign students in the United States, concluded that the relationship between the two may be more complex than that proposed by Gardner. The individual's attitudes seemed to be determind by his "world view" or general outlook. Factors which indicated a positive view of self, of one's native language group, and of the target language group, were all found to be substantially related to scores on a cloze test of proficiency in English. It was suggested that self-reported attitude measures were unreliable and that one could more accurately elicit attitudes by indirect survey techniques such as those suggested by Oppenheim (1966).

Chihara and Oller (1978) found little relationship between attitude measures and English language proficiency among adult Japanese learners in Osaka, Japan. This led them to question the validity of "traditional" attitude measures, thereby drawing the conclusions of many previous studies into question. They suggested that the relationship between attitudes and proficiency might be quite different for a population of subjects who are exposed to the target language only in a formal classroom context.

Oller and Perkins (1978) develop this line of analysis

further. In particular they analyse factors which they consider may influence estimates of the reliability and validity of affective variables, and they produce a novel speculation about possible spurious relationships between the learner's affective state and his attainment in foreign language learning. They isolate three main causes, viz. self-flattery, response set, and approval motive, for what they see as inflated values of validity and reliability indices associated with self-report type attitude measures. Fundamentally, respondents tend to produce answers which will enhance their own egos, will be perceived as pleasing the drafter of the questions, and will be consistent. The authors further suggest that intelligence and language proficiency may account for a considerable amount of the common variance frequently found to exist between affective measures and language proficiency measures. Subjects exercise their verbal intelligence in order to pick the expected answers to items in attitude questionnaires, and since this verbal intelligence has been found to be common to both first and second language proficiency, a spuriously high correlation is produced between the two. Savignon's 1972 hypothesis that the level of attainment which a learner achieves in his target language influences his attitudes towards that language can similarly be explained in terms of the Oller and Perkins framework:

> The students who attain higher levels of French proficiency would also be expected to learn what are the expected responses to the attitude questions for the same reason, namely, that they are better learners. (Oller and Perkins 1978, p.95)

The Oller and Perkins challenge helps to highlight a statistical maxim which can easily be overlooked, namely that correlation does not prove causation. The logic of their argument is based on two premises noted by Upshur et al. (1978). Firstly, approval motive, self-flattery and response set must be differentially present in different subjects. Secondly, these should affect total scores or ratings on the two measures to a comparable degree. It would be intensely problematic to demonstrate that this second requirement is adequately satisfied. Like the Gardner model, this present model is again linear in that it traces a line of causality from verbal intelligence to second language proficiency, with measures of affective state being a derivative of the process. In Oller's 1980 concept verbal intelligence is an independent variable which is at the basis of all intelligent behaviour. Consequently, his model does not provide an adequate account of the dynamic interplay between the total set of variables which constitute a second language learning/acquisition situation.

MacNamara (1973a) expresses some scepticism towards the view that favourable attitudes towards the speakers of the target language are necessary for successful second language acquisition. From a historical viewpoint, language shifts have generally been accompanied by unfavourable attitudes to the conquering people and their language. One may see examples of

this in the case of the Irish and Highland Scots and a majority of the Welsh. Celtic languages in Europe succumbed to Latin, the people of Provence accepted French in place of Provencal, and the Catalonians have learned Castilian in addition to Catalan. MacNamara concludes that people learn a second language when they are put in a situation where they have to communicate via that language.

It would seem that it is not possible to describe any direct line from cause to effect in the case of second language learning. For if this were possible, one would expect to find far greater uniformity than has been found to exist in the achievements of learners whose initial circumstances appear to be rather similar. Consequently, it appears that hypotheses derived from feedback models of second language learning offer the most promising directions for investigation:

> It seems that causal relationships among affect and proficiency will not be found to exist importantly in linear finite models such as those which are implied by Oller and Perkins [...]. Hypotheses derived from feedback models may be more fruitful areas for investigation. We find it more plausible that both cognitive and noncognitive aspects of personality affect language attainment and also that language attainment affects personality.
>
> (Upshur et al. 1978, p.104)

## 4 TOWARDS A FEEDBACK MODEL

The purpose of this section is to explore the nature of a feedback model of second language learning, with particular emphasis on an examination of the ongoing nature of human motivation. It is hoped to describe a framework within which the contribution of affect to the entire learning process may be assessed.

### 4.1 Theoretical implications of a feedback model

A feedback model of second language acquisition must of necessity be one which ascribes a central role to the personality of the individual learner. The process of second language acquisition is one of human development, and in order to analyse the process we must focus attention on the emerging personality as it shapes and is shaped by its environment. Personality shapes its environment to the extent that it engages in selective perception.

There is an essential difference between the philosophico-psychological views of personality which underlie, respectively, linear and feedback models of human development. In describing a sequential chain of events leading from social milieu to achievement in second language acquisition, one is inclining towards a behaviouristic model of personality. The Gardner model described above attempts to identify socially determined attitudinal and motivational variables which bear directly on the learner's response to exposure to a second language. In other words, in Gardner's view the social milieu determines the nature of the response set which is activated - subject to the broad limitations imposed by intelligence and language aptitude - by exposure to a second/foreign language learning situation. While it is remote from the earlier forms of classical behaviourism, this view nevertheless exhibits a tendency to reduce personality to the co-existence of a finite number of responses. As is typical of more recent manifestations of behaviourist theory (McDavid and Harari 1974, p.32), the units of both stimulation and response are larger configurations rather than the earlier oversimplified units typically associated with Watson (1924) and Eysenck (1952).

By first restoring volition and purpose to personality and then putting personality at the centre of any learning process one is automatically adopting either a cognitive or a humanistic conceptual model of man. A feedback model of second language acquisition views the interplay of interpersonal relationships as being an important factor in the formation of personality. It ascribes, however, a consciousness to the individual which is greater than the sum total of sensations received from both the social and the physical environment (Lewin 1936). Such a view restores both volition and self-initiation to the individual (Rogers 1978).

A personality theory of this kind which carries many implications for the process of second language acquisition is that of Henry Murray (Murray and Kluckholn 1953). The concept of "need" is central to Murray's theory. He describes need in terms of a force which is either internally or externally instigated and which organizes other psychological processes. He enumerates twelve physiological needs and twenty-eight psychogenic needs which he claims form the basis of all human behaviour. Individuals differ from each other to the extent that they experience different types of needs to different degrees of intensity at different times. There is a constant dynamic interplay among needs, and the individual's psychological make-up is at any time characterized by the relationship of these forces to one another.

A further implication of the feedback model is that the individual must be studied as an integrated, unique and organized whole. In Maslow's terms:

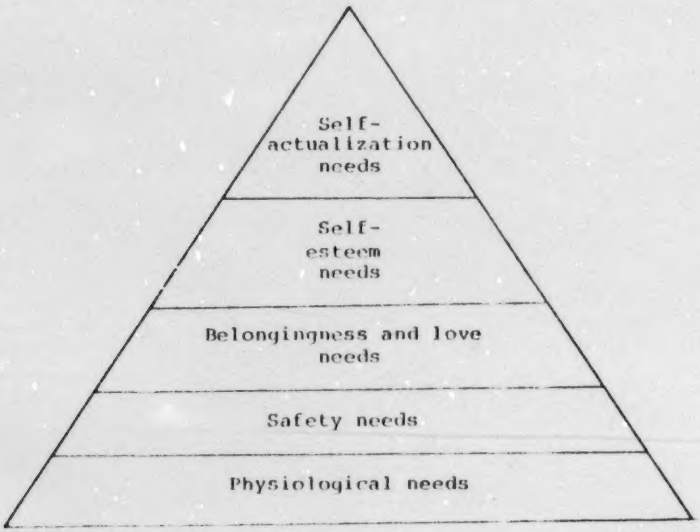
> In good theory there is no such entity as a need of a stomach or a mouth or a genital need. There is only the need of the individual. It is John Smith who wants food, not John Smith's stomach. (1970, p.19)

While social and physcial environment influence the individual's personality, their impact is mediated by previous experience. Similarly, traits of the individual are themselves hybrid entities. A trait cannot be described totally in its essence, rather it is conceptualized more completely by examining its relation to other traits.

This essential unity of human personality forms the basis of Maslow's 1970 humanistic theory. He uses the term "needs" to refer to desired personal states which are seen by the individual as a means of making life rewarding and meaningful. In his scheme, as one desire or need is satisfied another will surface in its place. This gives rise to Maslow's conception of a need hierarchy of human motivation. A schematic representation of this hierarchy is given in Figure 3. Underlying the scheme is the assumption that lower-order needs must be at least somewhat satisfied before the individual can become aware of or motivated by higher-order needs.

FIGURE 3

A schematic representation of Maslow's need-hierarchy theory




If one sees the individual as the central agent in any learning activity, "need" will be a central element in one's

model of motivation. For reasons discussed by McDonough (1981, p.144), needs associated with the achievement of homeostasis in the individual are not particularly applicable in this context. Instead, needs are viewed as the activating agent for the development of heterostasis, which involves the individual's continuing quest for growth and self-actualization.

## 4.2 Need as an energizing agency

MacNamara (1972, 1973b) holds that the main thrust in first language learning comes from the child's need to understand and to express himself. While the present paper is not primarily concerned with drawing parallels between the tasks of first and second language acquisition, nevertheless the paper's central thesis agrees with MacNamara and holds that people successfully acquire a second language if, and only if, they need to do so. It follows from this, as well as from the argument developed in 4.1 above, that in attempting to understand language learning as a process, the central focus of attention must be on the individual in society. Since "need" is a concept which will be at the centre of such a perspective, it is one which must be considered in some depth before any further elaborations are attempted.

The term has been widely used for more than a decade now in the literature concerned with the Council of Europe Modern Languages Project. The project aims, inter alia, at

> making available those intellectual tools which will facilitate the construction of learning programmes which are learner-centred and based on the needs and motivations of the learners. (Trim 1979, p.10)

When defined operationally, "needs" came to mean "what the learner wanted to achieve, what he had to do with the language he was learning" (ibid., p.41). When attempting to identify needs it is recognized that full account should be taken of the socio-cultural context in which the language learning occurs. Richterich (1980) claims that two kinds of needs can be distinguished:

- objective needs, which can more or less be assumed to be general from an analysis of typical everyday situations;
- subjective needs, which cannot be said to be general because they depend on events, unforeseen circumstances, and people. (p.32)

As this suggests, the term "needs" is rather imprecise and its use poses a number of problems which are discussed by Richterich (1980, p.32). Subjective needs are regarded as being somewhat unforseeable and therefore indefinable. In order to use the

target language in authentic communicative situations, the learner will need to be able to react appropriately to an almost endless number of things which cannot be predicted beforehand. The learner's interpretation of such situations will also be, to a greater or lesser extent, unique, since each individual brings his own particular experiences to bear on each new situation. Consequently, it would seem that the subjective/objective distinction becomes obscured. The concept of "need", if it is to be used as a basis for interpreting data from second language acquisition research as suggested above, must therefore be defined more precisely.

In psychological terms need is defined as "an exigency of the organism" (O'Doherty 1975, p.19). Needs arise only from within an organism. Second language needs arise within a human being, are at the source of language motivation, and give direction to the learning activity. It follows that all needs, other than basic physiological needs associated with the survival of the body, are subjective experiences. To refer to "objective" psychological needs is to confuse the term "need" with "that which is needed". Only the individual himself can experience his needs. By analogy, hunger is a subjective experience since only the individual himself can experience his hunger. Bread is an objective reality which is independent of hunger. Need must not be confused with deficit. To extend the analogy, it would be incorrect to confuse hunger with a lack of food in the body, since one would not refer to an unconscious person as being hungry even if he did not have any food for several days. It is, therefore, the subjective experience resulting from not having food, and not the lack of food per se, which constitutes the hunger. Likewise, a language need is the product of various subjective experiences and is not itself a deficit.

It may be dangerous to carry the analogy between "hunger" and "need" too far. Hunger can exist without reference to any external object, something which is not so in the case of needs. One may report that one is hungry without making reference to any particular kind of food. On the other hand, one cannot say that one needs without making reference to the object of that need. Porcher (1980) is emphatic on this point:

> A need is never a closed book, independent, ready-made, entirely shut-up within itself. There is always a relation, a tension, a dialectic between a present state and an (intended) future state. It is therefore a hybrid entity, composed of a present state of affairs (which can be detected, described and measured) and a wager on the future. (p.5)

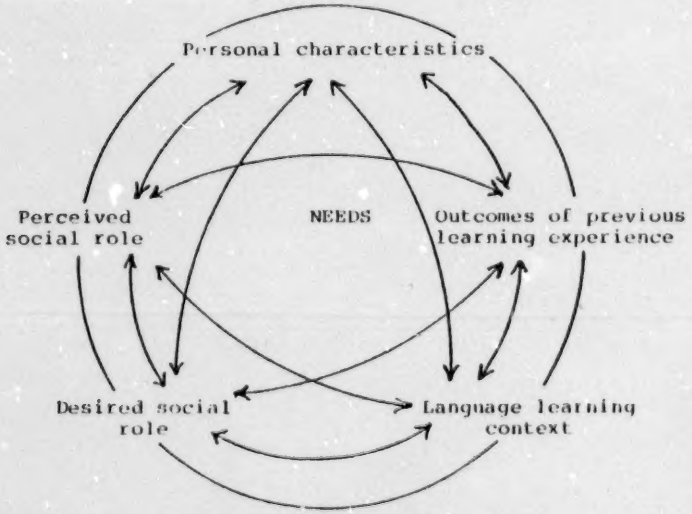
It is apparent, therefore, that the relationship which exists between the subjective experience of need and the object of that need is far closer than that which exists between hunger and food. A second/foreign language need is the product of a particular set of subjective experiences the parameters of which remain ill-defined. Figure 4 is an attempt at a schematic repre-

sentation of second/foreign language needs. It depicts needs as the product of the interaction of experiences associated with personal characteristics, perceived social role, desired social role, language learning context, and outcomes of previous language learning experiences. Each of these factors is also coloured by its relationship to each of the other factors. Any attempt to trace a direct line from one of these factors to outcome distorts the true nature of the second language learning/acquisition process. Figure 4 is intended to show that all needs, though future-orientated, exist in the present rather than in the future.

A representation such a this implies a functional motivation for the acquisition of a second language. Support for such a concept of motivation comes from studies which have found a similarity in the sequence in which various language functions have been acquired (Dulay and Burt 1974). If language is acquired in a particular sequence, then there must be some form of

FIGURE 4

Schematic representation of a learner's second/foreign language learning needs




language needs hierarchy which is being fulfilled by each step of the acquisition process. This view is in line with Selinker and Lamendella's 1978 claim that fossilization (the permanent ces-

sation of interlanguage learning) occurs for certain individuals at different levels for different discourse domains. A given learner can produce language which is far more native-like in one situation than in another. It would appear that different needs may be fulfilled by different levels of mastery of the target language. Those who wish to remain as foreigners among the native speakers of the target language will fossilize at an earlier stage than those who desire closer integration.

Bever (1981) proposes a functional motivation for the discovery of grammar in L1. He uses the term "psychogrammar" to refer to "the psychologically real representation of grammatical knowledge". He proposes that the cognitive skills required for speech perception are different in nature from those required for speech production and argues that the psychogrammar mediates between the development of the two separate systems. Hence grammar, in the case of L1, is acquired as a result of certain subjective experiences. The present concept of second language needs ascribes a similar functional role to the acquisition of grammar in L2. This is broadly in line with Corder's 1981 model of the learning process, which sees the learner starting his programme from a basic, possibly universal grammar, which he proceeds to elaborate in response to his exposure to the data of the target language and his communicative needs.

The intensity of the need which is experienced for one particular language rather than another is the result of an interaction of factors connected to personal, socio-political and previous language learning experiences (O'Doherty 1975). In Ireland, for example, learners may experience a need to learn French, German or Irish rather than Chinese, Afrikaans or Finnish because of their relatively greater socio-political importance. Each learner brings to his learning situation what Baecher (1973; reported in Brown 1973) refers to as "his own affective-cognitive map", which implies first that second language pedagogy should be learner-centred, secondly that the relation between individual traits and achievement in second language learning will vary from one socio-cultural context to another, and thirdly that we are at present quite a long way from being able to define Richerich's "objective needs" for the general second language learner. The most suitable learning situations are likely to be those which provide comprehensible input which matches the demands of the individual's affective-cognitive map (Krashen 1981).

Attitudes and motivations have most frequently been seen as resulting respectively from the individual's actual social role and his desired social role. By contrast, the present model holds that both attitudes and motivations evolve needs, which are the outcome of a complex set of interactions between various experiences and personal states. If this is true, then the concept of need forms a more secure vantage point from which to view the relationship of a very broad set of variables to success in the acquisition of a target language. However, it should be recognized that measurements of attitudes and motivations may not always be accurate reflections of the needs that underlie them.

Furthermore, although needs are seen as arising from conscious experience, they do not always exist at a conscious level; for example, it is unlikely that a child's need to master certain grammatical rules in L1 is consciously felt.

The depressed coefficients of correlation which are frequently found to exist between indices of attitudinal or motivational disposition and indices of achievement in second language acquisition reflect a discrepancy which may exist between measured attitudes and underlying needs. This discrepancy would account for the controversy concerning the relationship of attitudes to achievement in the target language. Savignon (1976) sees attitudes as "the single most important factor in second language learning". Others (Chihata and Oller 1978, Pierson et al. 1980, Teitelbaum et al. 1975) found no correlation between scores derived from attitude questionnaires and scores from second language attainment tests.

It was suggested earlier that attitudes are multi-dimensional constructs, and it is now contended that they are reflections of underlying multi-dimensional needs. Possible parameters which determine these needs were suggested in Figure 4 above, but these should not be taken as an exhaustive list of intervening variables. The relationship of factors which fall broadly within the parameters of each of these dimensions to achievement in a target language are discussed below. In the interests of clarity, each of these factors must be dealt with in isolation, though in doing so there is an inherent danger of losing sight of their interdependence.

## 5 FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE NEEDS

### 5.1 Personal characteristics

Two broad categories of characteristics may be identified: (i) characteristics pertaining to the individual's cognitive processing capacity and (ii) characteristics associated with the individual's affective and volitive disposition. For the purposes of the present analysis these two categories are treated separately, though in reality they are closely related.

#### 5.1.1 The cognitive dimension

Those who, to use Gardner's term, have an instrumental motivation for the acquisiton of a target language may be expected to have a relative affective detachment from the

task. In terms of our present needs construct one may deduce that their need is to acquire a particular linguistic skill which will enable them to achieve certain goals. Such goals may vary in nature from getting particular grades in an examination to being able to transact business with native speakers of the target language. It thus seems likely that there are aptitudes or intellectual skills which facilitate the acquisition of a target language. In approaching any learning task, the individual may be thought of as possessing characteristics which either facilitate or inhibit that particular learning task.

The work of John B. Carroll has concentrated primarily on enquiring into the nature of the particular abilities which facilitate foreign language learning. He has concluded:

> I am reasonably sure that foreign language aptitude is not exactly the same as what is commonly called "intelligence", not even "verbal intelligence", for foreign language aptitude measures do not share the same patterns of correlations with foreign language achievement as intelligence and academic ability measures have; yet, there is undoubtedly some overlap between the factors or components of foreign language aptitude and those components of intelligence and academic aptitude. (1981, p.86)

Carroll sees foreign language aptitude as consisting of four essential components: (i) phonetic coding ability; (ii) grammatical sensitivity; (iii) rote learning ability; and (iv) inductive language learning ability. In the present state of knowlege an analysis of the role of each of these capacities can be little more than speculative and heuristic, but it is nevertheless worth some consideration at this juncture. Carroll's analysis specifies three kinds of memory: short-term memory (STM), intermediate-term memory (ITM), and long-term memory (LTM). Phonetic coding draws mainly on ITM. It involves encoding auditory phonetic stimuli and orthographic symbols and storing these in ITM. Other relevant phonetic information may have to be retrieved from LTM presumably to facilitate the categorization of new stimuli. Phonetic images which are in STM are matched with orthographic symbols and if necessary stored in LTM. Grammatical sensitivity involves being able to retrieve grammatical concepts from LTM, recognizing grammatical functions, and matching functions in different sentence structures. Rote-learning ability involves making associations between linguistic forms and meanings in ITM, storing these associations in ITM, retrieving them when necessary, and finding mediators in LTM. Inductive language learning ability involves searching LTM for types of hypotheses concerning possible linguistic rules.

Hansen and Stansfield (1982) have examined the relationship of certain aspects of cognitive style to second language learning ability. They were referring particularly to a construct known as field-dependence/independence. Cognitive style is a construct which refers to the manner in which an individual tends to perceive, organize, analyse and recall information and experience. Field-dependence refers to a tendency to rely on external frames of reference in processing information, while field-independence means relying on internal frames of reference. Using a sample of 300 students in a beginner-level Spanish course at the University of Colorado, they found that field-independence was related to better performance in this formal learning context. The highest indices of correlation between the two were found in the case of cloze test measures of Spanish proficiency. They suggest that the skills demanded by the cloze test are those of exploiting the available information maximally in order to gain new insights into the unknown aspects of the target language. The nature of these skills would appear to be close to what Carroll (1981) calls inductive language learning ability, and it appears that such ability may develop from field-independent cognitive style. The lowest indices of correlation were found between field-independence and communicative competence. This suggests that there is more to speaking ability than purely linguistic knowledge and that field-dependence may promote ease of communication. A tendency to rely on external frames of reference may increase the individual's sensitivity to cues related to interpersonal communicative skills.

### 5.1.2 The affective dimension

If the cognitive attributes which lead to particular language learning styles were the sole factors determining the level of an individual's achievement in learning a target language, then one would expect to be able to predict with reasonable accuracy the likely outcome of various teaching programmes. Indeed, one would expect to be able to identify certain ability levels below which it would not be possible for an individual to acquire a second language. There is, however, a rather large body of documented evidence that factors other than cognitive processing capacity are involved. Clarke (1980), studying a sample of students enrolled in German and Japanese courses at Southern Illinois University, found that language aptitude scores were significantly associated with the level of achievement in the language classes. She concluded, however, that the relationship between the two was inconsistent and that achievement related about as strongly to factors other than aptitude. Similarly, Johnson and Krug (1980) concluded that affective factors are important regardless of the difficulty of measuring them. They did not see the standard

theories, however, as being very helpful in explaining their data.

In the discussion of cognitive style above it was suggested that field-dependence may be a factor in determining the attitudinal disposition frequently associated with integrative motivation. This dimension is of primary importance when dealing with learners who live in societies which are bilingual and bicultural (Krashen 1981). In such circumstances the learners' needs would primarily be to develop a communicative competence in the second language. According to Tucker and Lambert (1973), the development of such communicative competence depends on an awareness of and sensitivity towards the values and traditions of the people whose language is being learned. This implies that personal characteristics such as empathy, extroversion, positive self-concept, conformity, kindness, friendliness, sincerity, and the like could be expected to be related to the level of communicative competence achieved.

Empathy: This is the process of reaching beyond the self and understanding and feeling what another person is understanding or feeling. Brown (1973) suggests that language is one of the primary means of empathizing. In Krashen's (1981) terms the empathetic person may be the one who is able to identify more easily with speakers of the target language and thus accept their input as intake for language acquisition. This construct is one which has not received a great deal of attention from researchers in second language acquisition, possibly because it has proved very difficult to devise suitable ways of measuring it.

Earlier attempts at assessing the amount of empathy which various individuals had were developed in connection with the training of psychotherapists (Wallach and Strupp, 1960). Filmed interviews with patients were shown to the students. These film clips were stopped at various intervals and students were asked how they would communicate effectively with the patients in such circumstances. They were judged on their ability to recognize the existence of particular emotional states by their responses.

A somewhat similar technique was developed by Guiora et al. (1967), who found that what they referred to as Micro-Momentary Expression (MME) was significantly related to authenticity of pronunciation of French as a foreign language. Students who were sensitive to changes in the facial expression of speakers shown in film clips could also discriminate sensitively between sounds in a foreign language and could reproduce these sounds effectively. It appears that sensitivity to cues in an interpersonal situation involves both visual and aural discrimination.

Guiora et al. (1972) found that empathy played a significant role in subjects' ability to pronounce a second language authentically. A close examination of the details of that particular study makes the results difficult to interpret - a difficulty which the authors themselves did not claim to have overcome. The subjects for the study were students at the Defence Language Institute of the U.S.A. who were engaged in an intensive three-month course in one of five languages: Japanese, Chinese-Mandarin, Thai, Spanish, or Russian. Five distinct measures of empathy were used: Micro-Momentary Expression Test; Thematic Apperception Test; Photographic Perception Test; Literature Empathy; and Personal Rigidity Test. It was found that a multiple regression coefficient R = .323 (N = 401) was obtained from the six measures. It was noticed, however, that this low overall prediction was due to the cancelling relationships among the five different languages which made up the sample. For example, when the Russian group was excluded, the multiple Rs for the remaining groups increased dramatically. The authors were unable to interpret this finding since no appreciable differences in respect of age, background, I.Q., etc. were detectable between the members of the various groups.

Any re-interpretation of the results of this study can only be speculative because of the lack of appropriate data. Intuitively, it seems likely that American soldiers would have different attitudes towards Spanish on the one hand and Russian on the other. It is unlikely that very many of them would envisage having genuine personal relationships with native speakers of Russian and possible that there would, in fact, be an emotional barrier between the Americans and the Russians. The same barrier would not be expected in the case of Spanish, which is a relatively important language in the United States. It is reasonable to expect that different sets of language learning variables would be operative in the case of the two groups since their language learning needs would not be similar.

To date there has been a remarkably small amount of research done on the importance of the empathy factor for second language learning. In particular it is not known whether empathy is a basic disposition developed in childhood or whether it can be fostered and developed in the language classroom.

In conclusion, it appears that an individual's capacity for empathy is a constituent of integrative motivation. In Stevick's 1976 terms the empathetic student may be starting "with something he wants to say and with the person to whom he wants to say it" (p.107). The student allows his performance to develop

from somewhere deep within himself and hence fulfils some basic social need.

Degree of extroversion/introversion: This factor is important insofar as it helps to regulate the amount of comprehensible second language input which the learner will receive. It is of primary importance for the learning of a second rather than a foreign language, although it may have some importance for the foreign language classroom as well. Krashen (1982) claims that actual speech production by the learner is only of secondary importance to listening ability and the opportunity to hear the target language in authentic use. In his view it is theoretically possible to learn a language without ever actually producing an utterance in that language. He goes so far as to claim that in the case of the acquirer who has a very poor command of the target language, using speech may actually reduce the amount of comprehensible input he receives since it will encourage his conversational partner to engage in foreigner talk.

Active participation in conversation, however, leaves the acquirer with a degree of control over the topic being discussed, thereby ensuring that the language input which he receives is directly relevant to his needs. It is reasonable to assume that extroversion should be associated with a greater amount of social intercourse.

Hamayan et al. (1977), working in Montreal with grade seven students from English-speaking backgrounds, found that students who reported a high degree of shyness performed less well on French reading than did those who reported a low degree of shyness. They suggested that in such a setting, when students are less active participants in second language learning, they acquire less proficiency in all aspects of the target language than do the more actively involved students. The learner with an outgoing personality gets a greater chance of practising the amount he has already acquired.

Self-concept: Gardner (1979) claims that second language learning is different in nature from the learning of any other subject on the school curriculum. It involves in some way identifying with a new culture, and in certain cases this may be threatening to the individual's self-concept. Guiora (1972) introduced the construct "language ego", which is comparable to "body ego" or "social ego". Pronunciation is, according to Guiora, the most salient aspect of the language ego, the hardest to acquire in a new language, and the

most difficult to lose in one's native language.

It was suggested at the outset of this discussion that second language learning would be more successful if it contributed to an enhancement of self-esteem. Anderson (1982) draws attention to the importance of learners' own continuous self-evaluation as they proceed through a course of second/foreign language learning. If the course is not responsive to the learners' perception of their language needs, then the learners' self-esteem will be reduced, with a resultant high drop-out rate.

Oller, Hudson and Liu (1977), working with Chinese graduate students in New Mexico, found that factors which could be defined in relation to a positive view of self, of the native language group and of the target language group were substantially correlated with scores on a cloze test of proficiency in English. Oller, Baca and Vigil's 1977 study of socio-economically deprived Mexican American women studying English in a Job Corps Vocational School in New Mexico, produced similar results. The more subjects tended to see themselves as logical, sensitive, democratic, and shy, the better they tended to perform in a cloze test in English. Likewise, viewing the Mexican people as calm, conservative, religious, shy and humble was also associated with higher cloze test results.

Pierson et al. (1980) obtained similar results working with Chinese-speaking secondary school students in Hong Kong. The following traits were associated with higher cloze test scores for this group: humility, politeness, trustworthiness, motivation to strive for success, sincerity when dealing with others, and loyalty to family. Similarly, the more they saw Chinese people as logically-minded, wise, hard-working, and self-confident, the higher were their cloze test scores. Interestingly, this high self-esteem and high regard for their own culture was not associated with a correspondingly low regard for Western culture.

## 5.2 Integrating affect and cognition

It has been suggested that aptitude is of prime importance when one is concerned with the formal language learning situation, whereas attitudinal factors become important when learning takes place in informal communicative situations. Krashen (1982) summarizes his thinking thus:

In several places I have hypothesised that these atti-

> tudinal factors relate directly to acquisition and not learning, since they tend to show stronger relationships to second language achievement when communicative tests are used, tests that tap the acquired rather than the learned systems, and when the students taking the test have used the language in "acquisition-rich" situations, situations when input was plentiful. (p.31)

While the main trend of this argument is acceptable, one must not underestimate the role of attitudes even in the most formal learning situations. Tyler and Voss (1982) examined the role of attitude in the formal task of processing written texts. They were mainly concerned with how attitudes and previous knowledge of the subject matter of the text interact to affect the processing of the textual material. As subjects they used 41 students of political science from the University of Pittsburgh. Passages that purported to have been taken from Pravda were presented to the students. It was found that the students' attitude towards the Soviet Union was a significant factor in determining whether they perceived the text as being aggressive or non-aggressive. Those with a pro-Soviet attitude regarded all the passages as being less aggressive. This general tendency did not hold, however, when statements were incongruent with what the students expected to find in Pravda. Similarly, positive attitudes towards the Soviet Union helped subsequent recall by the students when the material was congruent with their expectations. Tyler and Voss hypothesize from this

> that knowledge and attitude are part of the same general system, and that knowledge and attitude components can be regarded as a set of more or less integrated modes in a network-like structure.
>
> (1982, p.534)

Since it is clear that knowledge is the product of earlier cognitive processing, it is apparent that attitude affects one's processing system at a very deep level. While it has been argued that aptitude is independent of previous learning experience, nevertheless it cannot be denied that in order to attempt an aptitude test one must have an understanding of the nature of the tasks involved - an understanding which is acquired from some previous experience. In the case of formal foreign language learning it is likely that very often learners will have neither strong positive nor strong negative feelings towards native speakers of the target language. A factor of more importance in this case will be their attitudes towards the actual learning tasks. It is likely that the attitudes which were brought to previous learning experiences will be present again in the new language learning situation. Hence attitude is a latent factor which influences both measures of aptitude and measures of achievement. Both becoming involved in a formal language learning situation and acquiring a second language informally are purposive activities which by definition fulfil some need. One therefore concludes that attitude and aptitude belong to the same general need-fulfilling system.

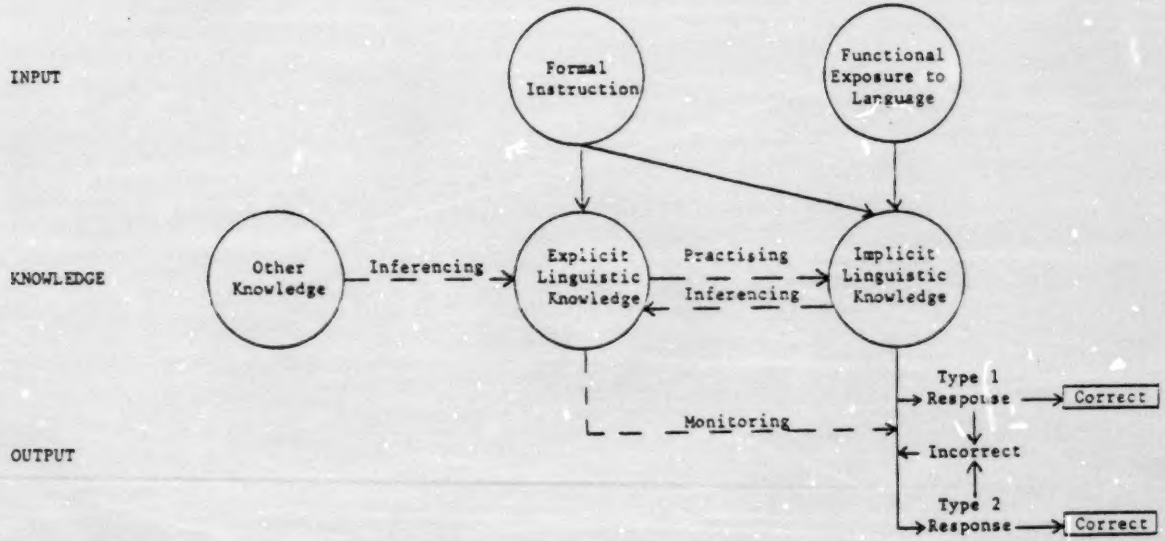



Figure 5

Bialystok and Frohlich's Model of
Second Language Learning

Figure 5 represents the Bialystok and Frohlich (1977) model of second language learning. It contains three levels of functioning - input, knowledge, and output. Language learning may be explained in terms of how these sets of factors combine. The dynamics of their combining are described in terms of (i) learning processes, (ii) learning strategies, and (iii) learner characteristics. The processes, represented by the continuous lines, are thought to be unconscious, while "strategies", represented by broken lines, refer to the conscious efforts made by the learner. Learner characteristics refer to various aspects of the learner's individuality. One may view the affective dimension as influencing the dynamic aspects of the model. Firstly, it will determine the extent to which the individual is ready for the "processes" involved. Secondly, it may be seen as influencing the efficiency with which he engages in the various strategies. The results of these two will affect the individual's explicit and implicit linguistic knowledge as well as other relevant knowledge. These in turn have a direct bearing on output. This model therefore treats previous knowledge, affect, and cognitive capacity as belonging to the same processing system.

## 5.3 Social role - desired and perceived

The importance of the social dimension and the needs, attitudes, and motivations created by it have been discussed above in relation to bilingual/bicultural situations. The social role of the learner is also likely to be an important factor in a monolingual society where one is concerned with foreign rather than second language learning. The distinction between the two types of society is not as sharp as it appears at first sight since no society can be self-sufficient to the point of being totally monolingual (for a framework by which to classify societies as either bilingual or monolingual, see Giles 1977). It is with social status within a predominantly monolingual society that this section of the paper is primarily concerned.

Within our working model of the hierarchical ordering of needs, self-actualization is conceived of as the ultimate need. This self-actualization has a strong social dimension. Eisenstein (1982) claims that attitudes stem from personal experience, which is reinforced by other factors such as the opinions of valued members of one's reference group. One would therefore expect a need for a foreign language to appear only in cases where the individual's social reference group placed some value on the acquisition of foreign languages or on scholastic success in general. This is supported by Feenstra and Gardner (1968), who found that parents' attitudes towards foreign-language learning affected the attitudes and achievement of their children. Interestingly, the same result was not found by Cummins (1977) in the case of achievement in Irish. Cummins's survey indicated that parental attitudes towards the Irish language were important

only insofar as they had a strong influence on whether children were sent to English-medium or Irish-medium schools. While the level of competence achieved by the pupils in the Irish-medium schools far exceeded that of pupils in the English-medium schools, within-school differences were not significantly related to parental attitudes. This result may be due to two factors: (i) the relatively similar parental attitudes towards Irish found in each of the two types of school and (ii) the communicative needs created by the structure of the Irish-medium schools - children were put in the position of having to communicate almost totally through Irish.

Socio-economic status has frequently been found to be an important determinant of the individual's desired and perceived social role. The relatively inferior scholastic performance of working class children has been well documented, as have hypothetical reasons for this phenomenon (Banks and Finlayson 1972, Craft 1970, Hargreaves et al. 1976). The influence of factors associated with parental occupation on the general attainment of pupils was also found to hold in the case of foreign language learning by Burstall et al. (1974). This was a longitudinal study of the French language attainments of British children from a wide spectrum of backgrounds. A closer examination of the results obtained by Burstall et al. suggests a number of reasons for the poorer performance of the working class children. Firstly, they appeared to have a more negative attitude towards schooling in general. Secondly, parental encouragement to acquire a foreign language appeared to vary with socio-economic status. Parents in high-status occupations offer their children more support during their schooling than parents in the lower-status occupations. This association between parental occupation and achievement in French became progressively more prominent as the children advanced through the school. One can readily account for these results within a framework such as the one proposed in this paper, as indeed the authors of the report themselves do:

> The secondary modern school boys were particularly characterized by a growing conviction that they were unlikely ever to speak French in after-school life, linked with a diminishing belief that their parents were in favour of their continued study of French.
> (Burstall et al., 1974, p.166)

The acquisition of a foreign language is not perceived by these boys as a means of fulfilling their needs. This general trend does not appear to be as strong in the case of girls, who are more inclined to accept the vocational value of a foreign language (Schools Council 1968, Sumner and Warburton 1972). Their general level of achievement in foreign languages is usually superior to that of boys, so that it seems reasonable to conclude with Morris (1966) that differences in achievement between the sexes are attributable to motivational and environmental factors rather than to differences in ability.

It would appear also that, in the type of monolingual society we are here concerned with, once parental attitudes are broadly favourable towards the acquisition of a foreign language, attitudes are no longer an important factor. In other words, once a certain threshold level of acceptability of foreign language learning has been reached, other factors such as aptitude and learning situation begin to predominate in determining success. Green (1975) investigated the importance of boys' attitudes towards German language learning in a grammar school in York. He found that there was only a weak relationship between achievement and attitudes towards the German people or their country. Similarly, Saviqnon (1972) found that initial attitude towards French was not an important factor in determining success; rather, progress was of primary importance. Since both studies were dealing with predominantly middle-class students, one can only conclude that foreign language learning was initially perceived as being a need. Their subsequent behaviour and attitudes may be viewed from a "need for achievement" (nAch) perspective. Those who succeeded in realizing their initial expectation of success persisted, while for others relative failure caused a loss of motivation, and so one finds a wide distribution of achievement scores. Such an interpretation is necessarily speculative, though it does get some support from Ferri's 1971 observation that fear of speaking French was almost invariably linked with fear of being exposed to the ridicule of other members of the class, particularly in a co-educational setting. One may conclude that low socio-economic status has the effect of creating low aspirations among learners and of producing in them a negative view of their learning potential (Burstall et al. 1974, p.31). The expectations that significant others have of them are also low, which reinforces their poor learning situation.

## 5.4 The learning situation

Gardner et al. (1978) claim that motivation to learn a second language is fostered not only by group-related attitudinal dispositions but also by attitudes towards the learning situation. Burstall et al. (1974) are, in fact, more emphatic on this point, claiming that

> Early achievement in French affects later attitudes and achievement to a significantly greater extent than early attitudes towards learning French affect the subsequent development of either attitudes or achievement. (p.214)

Both intuitively and on the basis of research findings it is reasonable to expect that the experiences which the individual has in the learning situation are responsible for attitude formation. Gardner at al. (1977) examined changes in students' attitudes, motivation and French achievement during a five-week

residential summer programme. While the course was particularly effective in increasing student motivation to learn French, the pattern of attitude changes was more complex as both positive and negative shifts were observed. This would appear to be a rather clear example of a situation where the individual's experiences shape his emerging self-concept. When these experiences are found to be unrewarding, then the individual's needs shift to seek experiences which are more gratifying. This interpretation is in accord with Seliger's 1977 observation that students who like the teacher seek out language intake by volunteering and generally becoming more involved in the classroom discourse. Those who participate more in the classroom have been found to have higher levels of attainment (McEwen 1976). It may be postulated, however, that high-achieving students are called upon more frequently in class because they are more likely to know the correct answer.

A study by Gliksman (1976, reported in Gardner et al. 1978) investigated the role of integrative motivation in determining behaviour in a second-language classroom. It was found that learners with high integrative motivation volunteered answers more frequently in class and were rated by observers as demonstrating more interest and enthusiasm. It was also found that the same learners made more correct responses than those with lesser motivation, which suggests that their overall rate of progress was superior.

In discussing the importance of the language learning classroom no distinction has been made between a bilingual sociocultural setting and a monolingual one. In the latter situation the learner has little exposure to the target language outside the classroom. One may ask whether in this case a very formal teaching method is superior to one which puts more emphasis on informal interaction. Researchers have in general been rather unsuccessful in demonstrating the superiority of one method over another (Krashen et al. 1978). Perhaps this is because different teaching techniques are necessary for different types of situation. While there are some indications that a more formal approach is more suitable for learners with higher levels of language aptitude (Burstall et al. 1974), this has not been convincingly demonstrated. The hypothesis that teaching method must vary with the characteristics of the group of learners accords with our proposed needs framework. Obtaining the most efficient "fit" between teaching method and the characteristics of the learners is a task which has received relatively little close attention from teachers or researchers. Perhaps attempts to come to grips with this problem would be more fruitful than attempts to produce a "best" teaching method.

## 6 CONCLUSION

This paper has set out to examine the role of the affective dimension of human personality within the entire second/foreign language acquisition process. Two concepts commonly used in the literature relating to this topic are those of attitude and motivation. While no single definition of these constructs is universally acceptable, a strong emotional component is a sine qua non for both. Motivation was viewed as an energizing agency which produced activity - frequently overt - congruent with the learner's underlying emotional dispositon. It was noted that in the work of R. C. Gardner attitudes were viewed as a product of cultural beliefs which remained relatively stable over time. Favourable attitudes afforded an endurance to the motivation which is necessary for prolonged application to the task of second language acquisition. Without such favourable attitudes, it was claimed, the motivation to acquire the language in question may become thwarted by the various setbacks which may be experienced. Two types of attitudinal/motivational disposition were distinguished, instrumental and integrative, though it was recognized that these were not necessarily mutually exclusive. An attempt to decompose the two into orthogonal components of a kind which referred to personal traits was noted, as were possible spurious relationships between measures of integrative motivation and attainment in second language learning.

It was suggested that second/foreign language learning is a process the nature of which is dependent on an indeterminate number of interrelated variables. It was not found possible to arrange these variables in a hierarchical order of importance, such that one could claim that A was a derivative of B. Instead all relevant variables exert mutual influence upon each other, and factors pertaining to the affective characteristics of the individual have an influence on the language learning process at a deep level. This affective dimension is in turn shaped by cognitive, social, and situational factors. An enquiry into the source of this dynamic set of interactions is an enquiry into the life-springs of human existence itself. A number of psychological theories which have gained some considerable recognition in their attempt to account for the ongoing nature of human motivation have been identified, though these seem to be little more than varying interpretations of a set of observations of human behaviour.

In the present paper, language learning motivation was viewed in terms of a striving to participate in certain purposive activities. The object of these activities is determined by the individual psyche, which is itself influenced by a wide variety of psycho-social variables. The relationship between the individual's psychological state and his desired state is seen as the origin of motivation and has been referred to as his needs. An aspect of the individual's needs which is frequently overlooked is volition, so that second language needs must be described from the individual's subjective viewpoint. Consequently, it is not

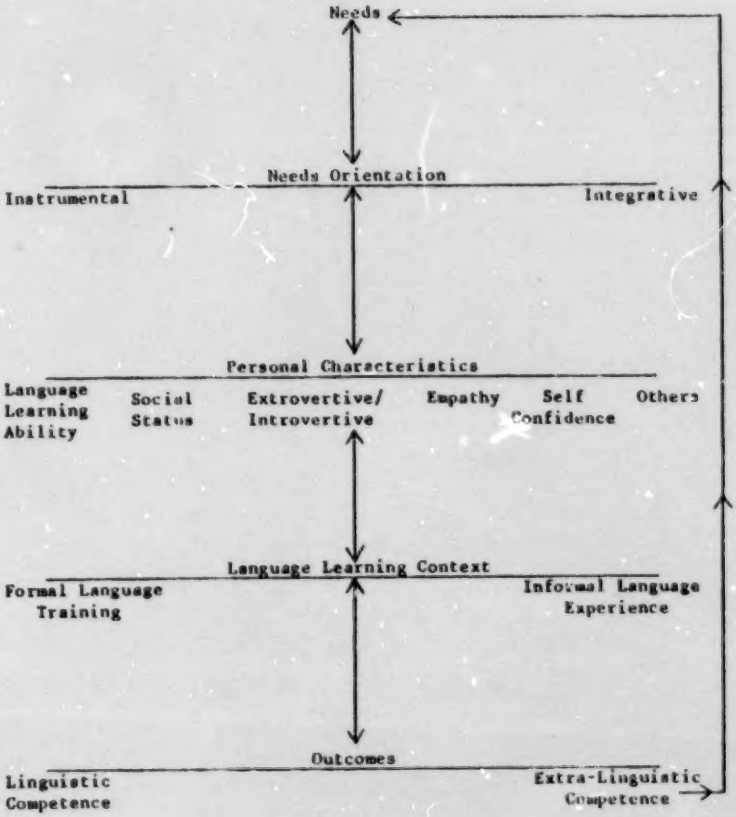



Figure 6

An Integrative Model of Second/Foreign Language Learning

possible to predetermine individual language learning needs objectively. They are in a constant state of motion, and their direction is determined by experience.

It has not been found possible to deal with affect or emotion as though they were separate categories of variables which had a bearing on the second language learning process. One cannot isolate a dimension of human personality which is pure emotion. Instead, the affective dimension is an integral part of the activity as a whole and acts in and through all processes. One's affective state is a factor which has an influence on the entire personality. An attempt to describe cognitive processing independently of an affective dimension was not found to be productive.

Figure 6 is an attempt to represent schematically how the elements of a language learning situation which have been identified in this paper combine. The central focus of the schema is on needs since these are viewed as the energizing agency which gives direction to the influences exercised by all the other elements. These needs always have particular orientations and second/foreign language needs orientation is here viewed as being at some point on the continuum between the polar opposites identified as instrumental and integrative orientations. This orientation both influences and is influenced by what are loosely termed "personal characteristics". It was suggested that certain types of cognitive style, for example, may facilitate an integrative orientation. On the other hand, the type of orientation which one has is likely to decide which aspects of one's personal characteristics will have the greatest influence on the learning situation. Learners with an instrumental orientation, for example, may have a greater incentive to consciously exercise their analytic ability or powers of rote learning in order to come to grips with the underlying logic of the grammatical system of the target language. The learner's personal characteristics and needs orientation have been seen as influencing the type of exposure to the target language which is most likely to occur. Learners with an integrative orientation frequently manage to get informal target language learning experience, while those with instrumental orientation may find that their needs can be fulfilled more efficiently in a formal language learning context. The outcomes of a learning process may be expressed in terms of degree of linguistic and extra-linguistic competence. As indicated previously, these outcomes influence needs, and so the process continues as long as the target language is perceived as enhancing the development of the organism. It is not envisaged that each set of factors plays the same role at each stage of learning. One may, for example, begin with an instrumental orientation and favour a formal language learning context, and then gradually develop a more integrative orientation and seek out informal target language exposure.

According to our working model, the learner's affective disposition plays a key role in influencing needs and consequently influences the contribution which each of the factors identi-

fied above makes to the entire process. The model offers a means of interpreting much of the apparently contradictory data regarding the relationship of various factors to foreign language learning. One must view the importance of any one of the above elements for achievement of competence in a second/foreign language in relation to the contribution it makes to the entire dynamic process. Hence in one situation integrative orientiation, empathy, self-confidence and informal language experience may be all-important, while in another instrumental orientation, high levels of verbal reasoning ability, and formal language learning contexts may supersede them.

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